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ABSTRACT

This guide is the eighth in a series of eleven generated in 1978 as the result of workshops that focused on peer training, a different approach to teaching. The workshops provided the opportunity for members of eleven identified role groups to work together with peers to examine the relationship between their specific role group and community education and the ways in which they could stimulate their peers to improve role performance and effectiveness. This booklet focuses on community education as seen by community college representatives. Topics considered include success factors of community college participation in community education, public relations, problems and ways to solve them, and strategies for influencing peers. (Author/LD)

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Role Guide Series #8

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PREFACE

This booklet is a result of two three-day Role Training and Peer Interaction Academies which were held in 1978 and funded by a training grant from the U.S. Office of Education, Community Education Program. The format for both Academies was designed to focus upon peer training, a method which has proven to be a useful teaching and information sharing approach. The sessions provided the opportunity for members of eleven identified role groups to work together with peers to examine in-depth:

a) the relationship between their specific role group and community education, and

b) the ways in which they could stimulate their peers to improve role performance and effectiveness.

Material development phases were interwoven with both structured and unstructured problem-solving activities. The follow-up activities and publications of the Role Guide Series were made possible from grants by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

Through a sharing of information, all participants gained knowledge. The information shared in this booklet is intended for use both by experienced individuals and those just entering the field. The booklet can help the experienced individual to become more aware of additional aspects of the role and of directions being taken by others. It can assist the novice in gaining an overview of the role as seen by those who have worked in this capacity. The information also can be used as a means for guiding others in the community to gain a better understanding of the role and its relationship to community education.

AS COMMUNITY COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES, WE BELIEVE

We believe that community education is an essential element in the solution of human problems. The needs of the individual are paramount.

We believe that our colleagues in community colleges throughout this country, some 1200 community colleges now enrolling half of the entering freshmen in American higher education, will grow in their understanding of the importance of community-based response and life-long learning.

We believe that in understanding and working with other agencies, the role definition of what each agency and each group is doing and how to use their resources is necessary.

We believe that community education should be based in the community college or community schools with centralized locations so that the community can draw upon the resources available.

We believe that we have the mission to meet the needs of the community. We are transferring this belief to the broader context of soliciting, cooperating, and working with other agencies and entities to provide the services which our mission says to do: meet the needs of the community. If we can operate in this manner to the best of our abilities, community education will become an integral part of the community college system.

INTRODUCTION

In the two Role Training and Peer Academies, the members of the community college group examined the philosophical foundation and practical functioning of both community colleges and community education. There was unanimous agreement that community college operations are based on the concept of community-based education and life-long learning. In examining community education, the group agreed that by definition community education is, and to be most efficient must be, a cooperative effort on the part of those agencies and organizations which have a total or partial mission to provide educational and developmental activities for citizens of the community.

The following factors were identified as being important in defining the stance of the community college in community education:

1) Community education can be an important element in the solution of human problems, individual and corporate.

2) The guiding principle in community education efforts should be to assist people in gaining control of their lives and, ultimately, to improve the quality of their own lives and life in their communities.

3) Community colleges can fulfill an important role in the community education developmental efforts; and, in fact, many community colleges already are involved in community education efforts.

4) To facilitate the community education effort most effectively, the community colleges must cooperate with other organizations and agencies in the identification of community needs, creative programming, and

effective utilization of staff, facilities, and resources.

The members felt that when community colleges are active participants and processors in community education efforts, many benefits are inherent both to the citizenry and to community colleges. Recognized benefits include:

- Better utilization of total resources: human, physical, and financial
- Increased involvement in life-long learning activities as a result of broadening the base for programming
- Improved image for the community college due to the increased exposure

The key to securing the full support and participation of community colleges in the community education process was identified as "sharing." The group believed that cooperation or "sharing" requires:

a) a clear understanding and acceptance of each agency's mission in relation to community education efforts, and

b) careful planning and articulation of programs with the focus placed on the needs of the citizenry and not on the agency offering the process.

FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The first step toward successful participation of the community college in community education must be a clear statement of the mission. The mission must be clear to faculty and staff, to the community leaders, to the clientele, and to all community groups. These groups should be involved in the development of the mission statement which reflects assessed community needs and in a periodic review of the mission in order to insure that activities and programs meet the ever changing needs and demands of the community.

The community college cannot hope to achieve success in the participation of community education without a total involvement by the community. Positive relationships must be established between the community college and the community. The community should be aware of the community college's mission and should have an understanding of the total program, including the basis for establishing needs, content, and criteria for evaluation.

If the community college is to realize success in its participation in community education, the staff selected to work in community education should possess a favorable attitude, philosophy, personality, and spirit of cooperativeness. A period of orientation should be planned in order to appraise the staff of the mission. It is imperative that those selected possess competent organizational skills in programming, political action, and interpersonal relationships.

Additionally, the success of the community college participation in community education is dependent upon availability of suitable resources and a sharing of these resources among all partner agencies. Interagency cooperation is vital to the success of community college participation in

community education. All partner agencies should have some input in the development of the total community education effort. These partner agencies must be accessible to the community college and the community; likewise, the community college and community must be accessible to the partner agencies.

STRATEGIES FOR SECURING PARTICIPATION

Several strategies were identified for securing community college participation in community education efforts. One strategy emphasized the continued building and enhancement of interagency cooperation. It was believed that both the hosting of meetings by various agencies and the utilization of expertise from within agencies would foster growth and development of interagency linkages. Accessible, two-way communication channels and sharing of agency facilities were identified as factors which enhance interagency cooperation. One strategy focused on public relations. It was believed that the mission of the community college should be presented in all publications and in all operational programs. The public relations efforts also should be designed to keep the public fully aware of community college activities, its acquisition and use of resources, its total service area, and its administrative structure. The public should also be aware of the community college's relationship to the community political and power structures.

The strategy focusing on staff/faculty selection and training was felt to be especially important to securing the community college's successful participation in community education efforts. The group members agreed that the selection process should:

- State selection procedures
- Present a clear job description
- Assure an understanding of the mission by applicants
- Consider diversity in the backgrounds of applicants

Another strategy focused on community involvement. It was believed that advisory councils should

be established for both programs and centers and that council members should be given recognition for their services. An additional aspect of securing meaningful community involvement was believed to be the utilization of community personnel and resources in the implementation of programs.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING THESE PROBLEMS

The problems faced by community college personnel participating in a community education effort are the same problems faced by other partner agencies in the system. The identification of these problems and the related strategies for overcoming them also are common to all partner agencies.

The first problem usually identified is that of the lack of agency cooperation. Inherent in this problem are such factors as an agency's tendency to maintain boundaries ("turf protection."), actual or perceived duplication of effort, and changing program needs. It was believed that before the problem could be solved, the following "truths" about agency cooperation must be acknowledged:

a. Agencies do not cooperate; people within agencies do.

b. Most agencies are looking for a quid pro quo -- that is, agencies are often willing to give up turf, programs, etc., but realistically want something in return.

c. Each agency perceives the other as being the deterrent to the agency cooperation process.

d. Agency cooperation must be worked at continuously.

Understanding and acceptance of these "truths" should provide individuals whose job it is to establish agency cooperation, with a starting point when developing and/or implementing strategies to secure successful cooperation. Some examples of

possible strategies that can be utilized by community college personnel are:

a. Providing the leadership in getting the agencies together.

b. Emphasizing the fact that community college personnel are not interested in and are not capable of providing all of the services; they are interested in assisting, assessing, etc.

c. Participating fully in an interagency group once it is formed.

The second problem identified is that of resources: funds, physical facilities, people, and time. The basis of the problem is how to get the most effective use of each resource while attempting to deliver quality programs. The following are some examples for addressing this problem:

a. Cooperating with other delivery agencies to reduce duplication and share resources.

b. Planning carefully at the outset, as well as assessing the program during implementation in order to make the operation efficient.

c. Terminating programs that have outlived their usefulness or are otherwise unnecessary.

d. Providing affirmative-type training programs for personnel directly involved in the delivery system as well as those who support the system.

e. Brainstorming for innovative approaches to programming with emphasis on efficient use of available resources.

f. Displaying a willingness to compromise and negotiate on questions concerning turf, program(s), etc. in an attempt to have better utilization of resources.

A third problem identified involves that broad area of pressure which is exerted on agencies and personnel by local, state, and federal laws, regulations, budgets, policies, etc. The basis of this problem lies in the politics involved in delivering community education services. Some strategies for dealing with this problem are:

a. Recognizing power structures and working within those structures.

b. Seeking a public commitment from the appropriate persons or organizations (including local power structures) toward programs, concepts, etc.

c. Utilizing clients, lay advisory people, etc. in selling programs to the local political and power structures.

d. Carrying the "selling" of programs a step beyond the clients to the administrative and political persons who have the power to influence regulations, policies, and budget.

e. Directly involving political persons in the delivery system.

A fourth problem related to the delivery of community education services is that of community expectations and involvement. Attitudes, values, degrees of involvement, and similar personal and community characteristics can assist or hinder the implementation of the community education concept. Strategies that may assist in overcoming problems arising from these sources are:

a. Developing increased positive attitudes toward community education through action-type awareness programs

b. Attempting to involve clients through the personal contact of "asking them"

c. Carefully selecting the lay advisory committee members

d. Utilizing advisory committees in a manner which makes them feel a part of the system

STRATEGIES FOR INFLUENCING PEERS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

1. Staff Development

Objectives: Creating an awareness of the community education concept.
Enhancing competencies.

Activities: Workshops Site visits
Training Modules Seminars

Development of a professional, and local library of resources (printed materials, etc.)

Formal education (graduate study - provide as close as possible)

Resources: Consultants Peers
Budget State offices
Community education centers
Professional associations
American Association of Community and Junior Colleges
National Community Education Association

Time Frame: Ongoing process

Potential Pitfalls: Funds
Personnel
Time

2. Communications among community colleges

Objectives: Sharing information
Enhancing awareness
Promoting community college/community education relationship

Activities: Site visits Newsletters
Information exchange

Application for special funding
Participation in professional meetings
Identification of target groups (with whom you can identify)
Use of mass media
Subscription and contribution to journals

Resources: Money State offices
Personnel
Reporters from media
Centers for community education

Time Frame: Ongoing

Potential Pitfalls: Overextension Evaluation
Follow up
Inadequate resources
Personal attitudes ("I know all the answers.")

3. Development of community college consortia relationships (low profile with high profile)

Objectives: Sharing information
Enhancing awareness
Promoting community college/community education relationship
More efficient use of resources (staff development, shared financial support, etc.)

Activities: Call a meeting (present concept -- well organized)
Invite presidents (or have them select alternates)
Concomitantly invite the other levels of staff for training
Follow up
Development of strategy
Identification of components

which will constitute the consortia

Resources: Money
Personnel
Reporters from media
Centers for community education
State offices

Time Frame: At the point of readiness

Potential Pitfalls: Time
Inadequate institutional commitment (in name only)

4. Methods of influencing state policy and state legislation

Objectives: Gathering support for community college/community education efforts
- Policy
- Financial
- Legislative

Promoting community education efforts

Activities: Lobbying (provide information)
Provision of staff training in the political process
Involvement of lawmakers in local activities
Personal visits to lawmakers and agencies
Identification of "friends" -- (allies who will be of assistance)

Time Frame: Ongoing

Resources: Institutions and development personnel
Professional associations
Influential local leaders
Clients -- individuals and

Library material -- Federal Register, etc.

Potential Pitfalls: Time
Budget

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

We believe, those of us who believe in community-based education at all levels, that the schools (elementary schools, universities, technical colleges, community colleges, and high schools) cannot do it all. We know that personnel and staff of YMCA's, the leisure services departments, various agencies, and continuing education departments are making many contributions and that those contributions ought to be endorsed and supported by all of us who believe in the worth of the community, in helping people to gain control of their own lives, and ultimately, in improving the quality of life in our communities.

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